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January 31, 2011

**Maryland Campus Compact for Student Veterans**  
Memorandum of Understanding between the State and  
Maryland Institutions of Higher Education

**Background:**

In 2010 there were over 470,000 Veterans residing in Maryland accounting for over 8% of the State's total population. Of these, more than 22,000 have recently returned from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and thousands more are expected as these conflicts continue.

Our returning Veterans now have access to a new GI Bill that provides comprehensive educational benefits and many are taking full advantage of this opportunity. Maryland colleges and universities enroll many of these students and thus contribute to the success and well being of a generation who have offered their service and sacrifice for our Nation's security.

Veterans need our support to ensure their successful reintegration into civilian life, including in higher education. This compact seeks to ensure the educational success of Veterans who attend Maryland schools by promoting opportunities for colleges and universities to enhance their awareness and understanding of the reintegration needs of our Veterans. The compact also encourages the dissemination of recognized best practices in the academic and support services provided to Veterans.

While our returning Veterans typically bring a high degree of maturity and important military-related life experiences and skills to the classroom, many Veterans also return home after experiencing significant deployment and combat-related stress. As noted in studies by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs, military related behavioral health and relationship problems are serious risk factors for these returning Veterans. For some, reintegration from military service to civilian life is a major challenge. In addition, some of these Veterans begin their higher education experience without adequate high school preparation which often presents an additional barrier to their successful transition into higher education.

A number of Maryland colleges and universities have developed inclusive campuses where student Veterans feel welcome and quickly become an integral part of campus life. Many of these schools have also designed very successful academic transition programs and support

services to further ensure Veteran success. One of the goals of this compact is to facilitate the sharing of these best practices among all of our public and private institutions with a hope that we can make higher education in Maryland truly "Veteran Friendly" in both spirit and practice.

**Purpose:**

To ensure the educational success of our returning Veterans, including their recruitment, successful transition into higher education, retention, and eventual graduation.

**Agreement:**

We the undersigned commit our institution to provide the following services, within available financial resources, and to work toward full implementation as budgetary conditions improve:

- 1. Awareness.** Ensure that all members of our educational community, including administration, faculty, and staff have an appreciation of Veteran reintegration challenges by providing in-service training to enhance their awareness, knowledge, and skills specific to the strengths and challenges presented by these Veteran students.
- 2. Coordination.** Ensure effective communication and coordination of services to ensure the success of Veteran students.
- 3. Designated "One Door."** Provide a "one door" system so that student Veterans are able to connect to their educational and support needs through the establishment of a Veterans Office or designated staff person responsible for such coordination. In addition to being the focal point on G.I. Bill claims and other veteran issues, this entity would identify and coordinate liaisons for services in key offices on campus (e.g., financial aid, admissions, academic advising) and off (e.g., employment, behavioral health counseling, housing information). Additional responsibilities may include (a) establishing a student Veteran orientation, (b) support for Veterans student groups, (c) advising the President, the Chief Academic Officer and the Chief Officer for Student Affairs on student veteran issues, and (d) dissemination of information about Veteran population to faculty, staff and student organizations.
- 4. Behavioral Health.** Assist veterans needing behavioral health counseling and support resources through services provided on campus or through referral to appropriate agencies. As a counterpart, ensure that faculty and staff are well informed about post-traumatic stress symptoms, traumatic brain injury, and other behavioral health and relationship issues that are challenges for many returning veterans. Faculty and staff have an important role in helping to reduce the stigma often felt by these Veterans and can help them access appropriate support services.
- 5. Financial Aid & GI Bill Support.** Veterans receiving GI Bill benefits should be viewed as a unique population by the financial aid office. In order to avoid barriers to success, particular care should be taken to ensure that veterans who have their benefits certified do not experience hardship and can continue their studies even if their G.I. Bill payments are late.
- 6. Peer Support.** Promote and support student Veteran groups as an opportunity for these students to interact with fellow Veterans, while still participating in campus life. These groups enable student Veterans to compare experiences, assist each other with navigating through their benefits and college experience, and increase the chances for success for the student Veterans.



Mentorship of newly returned Veterans by experienced student veterans is strongly encouraged.

#### Effective Date

This Compact shall become effective upon the signature of the parties. This agreement may be terminated at any time upon 30 days advance notice by one party to the State, and may be amended by the written agreement of the undersigned or the institution's authorized designees.

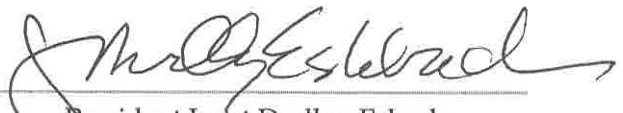
#### Signatories:



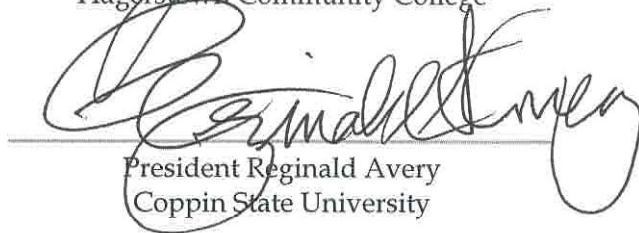
Anthony G. Brown  
Lieutenant Governor




President Guy Altieri  
Hagerstown Community College



President Janet Dudley-Esbach  
Salisbury University



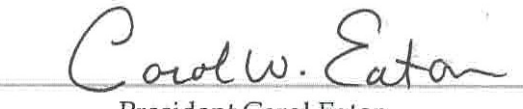
President Reginald Avery  
Coppin State University



President Charlene Dukes  
Prince George's Community College



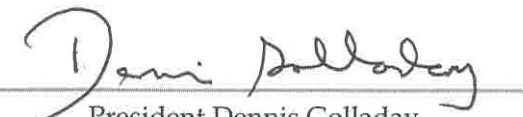
President Mickey Burnim  
Bowie State University



President Carol Eaton  
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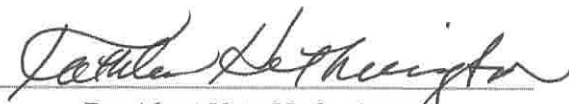
President Dennis Golladay  
Harford Community College



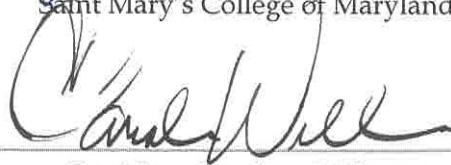
President Brad Gottfried  
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President Joseph Urgo  
Saint Mary's College of Maryland



President Kate Hetherington  
Howard Community College



President Carolane Williams  
Baltimore City Community College



President Freeman Hrabowski, III  
University of Maryland, Baltimore County



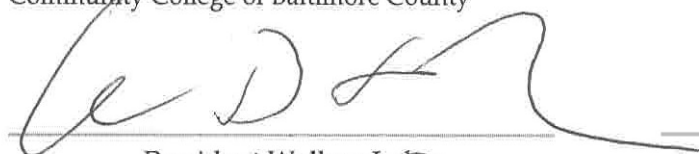
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Morgan State University



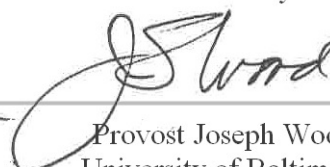
President Sandra Kurtinitis  
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President Faye Pappalardo  
Carroll Community College



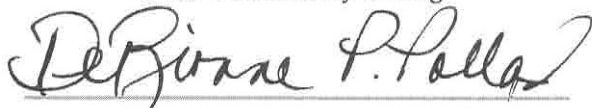
President Wallace Loh  
University of Maryland, College Park



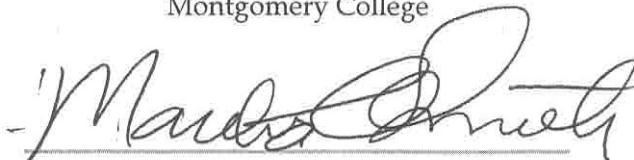
Provost Joseph Wood  
University of Baltimore



President W. Stephen Pannil  
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President DeRionne Pollard  
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President Marty Smith  
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